FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER

Volume XIX, Number 2, April 1968

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Our purpose: To promote the practice of prayer among all religious faiths whose fundamental belief is in God, regardless of race, creed, or color, and whose tenets include the universal attributes of truth, honesty, justice and mercy, that thereby there may arise a closer relation to Almighty God and a deeper spirit of fellowship among mankind.

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IN MEMORIAM

Marius C. Thode

(1890-1968)

Among the letters published by *The Journal American* in December 1965, was one—concerned with "the power of silent prayer"—by Marius C. Thode. The executive secretary of FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER, having read it, wrote to him. He responded as follows: "I had thought that I was retired from business, but you have re-tired me FOR business—God's business." In April of the next year he was elected a trustee and vice president.

Ill in recent months, Mr. Thode attended a reception in honor of Lady Coote on March 10. His death occurred on March 26.

It is fitting that this issue contains the last article which he sent FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER. He was assiduous in his devotion to the purpose of the Fellowship and, lately, itched to be able to turn his full attention to it once again. His enormous interest was shown in the fact that he wrote his last article—the one on page 23—in spite of failing eyesight. One of his chief anxieties was the gathering-together of more people who could share his extraordinary devotion. With his article, and its special values, and with others printed in earlier issues, he succeeded in attracting more of such people than he knew. Personally, also, he brought many friends to FIP through his charm, quietness, and sincerity.

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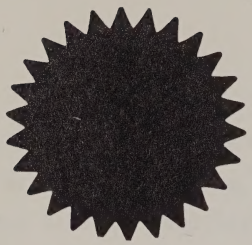
EDITORIAL

"Work is my salvation," my father always said. It is an old-fashioned phrase that has come down to us from a world in which more work was more necessary for survival than it is in ours and the word *salvation* meant something more familiar than it does today to people's ears. Yet even now, to a person with more than half a lifetime behind him, the phrase continues to carry a meaning.

A person with that amount of experience behind him understands the phrase very well. This is so because a person of that age knows the difficulties of life—the inescapable emotions of sorrow, lost hopes, guilt, regret. A person of that age knows how such difficulties separate him from the stillness and harmony of life when it is good. He knows how these difficulties alienate him from all that matters—from his own self, from the people he loves, from whatever it is he deems divine. He knows, too, that to recover these lost treasures he can do two very human things: he can work and he can love, both of them, in a sense, forms of prayer.

Love we have spoken of in earlier commentaries.

But work. . . .Anyone who has cooked a meal, cleaned a room, mowed a lawn, written a book, or painted a picture restores himself, by these very functions, to a relation with life. The very use of human energy brings satisfaction. But it seems to be the use of energy for work rather than for play which brings the most. Anyone who has ever really worked, however, knows that good hard work frequently becomes play, necessity and accomplishment blending in delight, delight taking us back from our doldrums, whatever they may be, to the wonderful feeling of being *in* life rather than out of it.



FROM THIS PLACE OF DISENCHANTMENT

Jean H. Richards

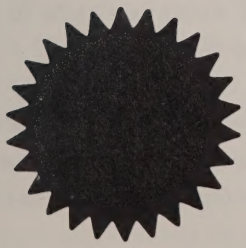
From this place of disenchantment
Here at the edge of death—cloth-covered
grave that hides the earth—
Life dwindles to a fainting candle flame
That flickers in a glass.

From this place of dying dreams—
Death of that which hardly lived—
From this lonely ending place,
Past the place of caring, hurting,
At last sensationless,
My grief cannot be told in tears.
My voice cannot find words for this place
of emptiness
For here words fail in meaning becoming
only symbols—
Scalloped shells that once held throbbing life
Cast up upon the sand—

From this place of at last knowing
The ugliness of the body wilting,
The voice failing, the spirit falling,
On this day of the icy wind blowing,
That mocks the spring's coming and the flower's
returning,
From this time of subtraction,
Comes this hour of honesty with one emergency exit—
Pretending that it is not so—

From this small spot in vast space
Among indifferent stars
From this quick tick of the clock out of
tumbling time—
Minutes to hours-to days-to years-
To centuries past and future
Comes no answer.
God silent, unsmiling on His child,
But there.
From this place I pray, I hope,
I strive to know some meaning
And to find it in myself to say

Death to the body! Life to the soul!



VOICES

J. P. Vaswani

"Life is a maze, a puzzle-path," said a young college student to me, last evening. "I feel confused, confounded. I see no way out of the perplexities and problems which baffle me, again and again. I am as a child lost in a fair. What may I do?"

And I said to him:— "Brother! If only I become as a child, I have no more to do. The child trusts its mother and knows that the mother will always keep it safe from harm."

Our difficulties and dangers begin the moment we cease to be children. When I think I have grown up and I am able to look after myself, I am faced with trials and tribulations, which overwhelm me, again and again, and which rob me of the joy of living. The child is singularly free from worries and cares, for it knows, beyond a shadow of doubt, that the mother is there to provide for all its needs. The mother anticipates the needs of her children and provides for them well in advance. We, who think we are independent, only create for ourselves a situation in which we have to slave from dawn to dusk. True freedom belongs to the child!

A child-soul I met many years ago. He was advanced in years: age had written wrinkles in his face, but the smile of God was in his eyes. And he always looked fresh and radiant as a child of five.

And I said to him:— "O Sanat Kumar! O Youth Eternal! tell me what is the secret of your unsullied freshness."

And he answered:— "I always feel fresh, for I have no worries, no cares, no anxieties."

And in sheer wonderment, I asked:— "Do you mean to say that no unpleasant occurrence has ever crossed your path?"

"Far from it," he quietly answered. "The basket of my life has been filled, again and again, with many a bitter fruit. Failures and frustrations have come to me in and out of season. But they touch me not. For when I find myself in an unpleasant situation, I enter within myself and, gazing and gazing and still gazing at the calm, beauteous countenance of the Mother Divine, say to Her:— "Ma! Mother! Here is one more burden for you to bear!" And then I forget all about it. And all goes well with me,— always!"

"The strong alone can shoulder the burden!" So sings the well-beloved poet of Sind. Our tragedy is that we try to lift heavy loads on our weak shoulders, when we can so easily pass them on to One to whom all the burden of all the universe is a feather's weight. Weighed down by burdens we cannot and need not carry, we move through life, travailing and groaning in agony and pain. All we need to do is to go within ourselves and make contact with the Mother Divine and cast our cares at Her Lotus-feet. Then we may well move along the pathways of life, singing as we go!

The secret of the true life,—the life that is life indeed,—is living contact with the deeper Self that we really are. How may the contact be established? Be still to know thy God! All around us is the sorry spectacle of restless men, moving on from one work to another, achieving nothing, knowing not wither they move. To them all speaketh the word resounding through the centuries: "O Children of an agitated age! Be still! Be still!"

To be still is to be relaxed, is to be restful. Avoid overwork! Overwork is the grave-yard of many a noble soul. The overworked man is a burden to himself and nuisance to others. Do not rush through your daily tasks. But move slowly and quietly from one duty to another, pausing again and again, for a brief while, to pray and rest at the Mother's Lotus-feet. This work, O Mother Beloved! is Thine. May I be but an instrument of Thy Will Divine!

This aspiration has the power of transforming any of the most secular work into a sacrament. This aspiration keeps the contact alive and makes our work a source of blessing and inspiration to all who cross our path.

It is not the *amount* of work we do that matters, but the *way* we do it. It is not *what* we do, but *how* we do it. Many there be who toil and drudge and slave, day after day, month after month, year after year: their work is as a shadow on the wall. It vanishes the moment it is born. True work, abiding work, the work that may transform lives, is that which flows out of the centre within the Heart: it is the centre of Harmony and Happiness, of Peace and Joy.

The world, today, wanders from unrest to unrest: and men and women, alike in the East and the West, await a new outpouring of the Spirit, a new illumination, a new revelation of the Heart. It will flow not through the so-called great ones, but through the little ones, the children of God.

One mark of the child-like soul is that he hath no care for the morrow. He is singularly free from all fear of the future. Who will feed me tomorrow? Who will supply my daily needs? Such thoughts do not beset his mind. For him it is enough that the Mother *is!* She will provide. It is Her sole responsibility to take care of us and look after all our needs. The little child playing in yon compound has not the least anxiety about his mid-day meal. His mother is there to provide at the right time.

Of Guru Amardas, it is said that each evening, he gave away all he had, keeping not a grain of corn for the morrow, not a copper coin in his purse. Before night fell, he emptied his store of provision,—he even drained the pitchers dry! "The morrow will take care of itself!" he said to his disciples who wondered at his strange behaviour. And the morrow did take care of itself. The Guru was not an ascetic: he was a family man with wife and children. And each day he had a *langar* (common kitchen) at which many a pilgrim and passer-by ate their fill. Unshakable was the Guru's faith in Providence; and Providence never failed him.

Of Jesus it is related that pointing to a procession of ants, he said to his disciples:—"Ye of little faith! look at the ants: who gives them their daily food?"

And one of the disciples said:—"Master! they need so little!"

"Then look at the birds!" said Jesus. "They toil not nor do they save for the morrow. Yet they get their daily food and are happy!"

And the disciple said:—"Master! birds have wings with which they fly and pluck fruits from trees!"

"And what about the wild beasts?" Jesus asked. "How fat they are! They have no wings. Yet they, too get their daily food!"

The child of God does not take life "seriously." He understands that all that happens is but a play of the Mother Divine. He becomes the Mother's playmate,—accepting all that comes to him cheerfully, meeting all situations merrily.

He does not prepare in advance. He does not make any plans. He but lives as a child of the Mother, and he knows that in the measure in which he becomes a willing tool in the Hands of the Mother, the Great Plan will be revealed to him. So he claims nothing: he asks nothing: he seeks nothing: he plans nothing. He becomes a channel for the Divine Plan to flow through.

To such an one death loses its terror and defeat and despair taste sweet. In pleasure and pain, in loss and gain, he gives gratitude to God.

The child of the Mother rejoices in the darkest hours of life, and becomes a bearer of the Torch to many. He seeks no honor for

himself but readily gives it to others. He flatters no one: he fears no one: He feels happy in occupying the lowest place, in doing the meanest task. He feels no responsibility: he seeks no reward. But in the depths of darkness, when not a star doth shine, he lifts up his tear-touched eyes and beholds the sweet smile on the Mother's Face and hears Her still, small voice say:—"Well done, my child! I, thy Mother, am not afar! I am with thee, within thee!"

(From MIRA published in India)

KEEPER OF THE FIRE

Emma S. McLaughlin

If I allow the winds of doubt
To blow my candle flame about,
So that dark shadows gather near
And fill another soul with fear,

I am not keeper of the fire,
Nor am I seeking to inspire
Another, guide his step aright
Through darkness into morning light.

HIROSHIMA REMEMBERED, ON VIEWING A SUNSET BEYOND THE PALISADES

Carla Patsuris

So like the many sunsets men have known:
This flaming magic fused with glory, miles
Across from dear and almost-violet shores
(Or are they distant Hesperian Isles?)

Blow up the world, man, with *one blast*
But have it how you will: Futurity,
Reiterating beauty such as this
Triumphant hue for hue, will always be;

Steadfast suns will keep their endless dates
With lengthening designs of newest wonder
In covenants on sky of bending blue
(And sky is promise for a whole world under.)

EASTER BOUQUET FROM AN IRON WORKER

Carla Patsuris

He whose fingers have rooted corner-stones
Into dungeon earth
Whose body has bosomed iron
Whose hands have riveted towers;
He whose toil has moisted
Tons of steel
Where swallows wheel

Has cupped into an urn—
Immortalized by song—
The sun on a stalk
The moon on a stem,
With twigs of stars,
Tied by ribbons of rain-bow hues
Bright as the hope a faith renews.

They say that one who works with steel and sky
Takes these dimensions to measure by...
Behold this gift and know
That it is so.

THE TIME IS NOW

Carla Patsuris

We hear the pounding roar of Universe
As dinosauria once heard new approach
And turn our backs on necessary things
With Adam-like and Eve complacency
Then curious! We view the evidence
Of *reach* beyond our ken, yet tarnish-wear
The only concepts we assume we own

There is an urgent need to add a sense
To match our widening ways lest we become,
In our own land, bewildered Aliens;
Though five's enough for small dimensions we
Must in our search identify through more:
The quest is ours! This Era's moral right
Is for a world communication NOW.

THE DEMONSTRATION

Carla Patsuris

With plunge and siege, with sound of doom
Accumulating winds
Battered building towers,
Whipped and welted trembling trees
Then clawed in slapping whelms of rain
Door and window-pane

But now all the young larks
Lilt their rousing songs,
A blue field unfolds
One blazing helianthus
And Dawn repairs our night of fear:
THE LIGHT THAT WAS PROMISED IS HERE.

SLOW ME DOWN, LORD!

"Slow me down, Lord! Ease the pounding of my heart by the quieting of my mind. Steady my hurried pace with a vision of the eternal reach of time. Give me, amidst the confusion of my day, the calmness of the everlasting hills. Break the tensions of my nerves and muscles with the soothing music of the singing streams that live in my memory. Help me to know the magical restoring power of sleep. Teach me the art of taking minute vacations . . . . of slowing down to look at a flower, to chat with a friend, to pat a dog, to read a few lines from a good book. Remind me each day of the fable of the hare and the tortoise, that I may know that the race is not always to the swift; that there is more to life than measuring its speed. Let me look upward into the branches of the towering oak and know that it grew great and strong because it grew slowly and well. Slow me down, Lord, and inspire me to send my roots deep into the soil of life's enduring values that I may grow toward the stars of my enduring destiny."

— Holborn

(from THE SPIRITUAL HEALER)

By courtesy of Murray Young

CHECK ON YOURSELF

"Four things come not back," says a Persian proverb: *"The spoken word—the sped arrow—the past life—the neglected opportunity."*

Do I realize that countless little challenges at home, on the job, at school or in civic life can have long-range consequences? Or do I brush them off?

Do I familiarize myself with the great issues confronting our country and our world? Or do I succumb to the *"It's none of my business"* attitude?

Do I take to heart the Master's admonition, *"Lift up your eyes and behold that the fields are already white for harvest"?* (John 4:35) Or do I shut my eyes to opportunities to help solve the many social, religious, economic, racial and cultural problems of our times?

Am I alert to openings all around me to contribute to the betterment of everybody . . . by voting regularly . . . taking an interest in school affairs . . . speaking up at meetings . . . writing thoughtful, constructive letters to newspapers, magazines, radio and TV stations and motion picture companies? Or do I *"Throw in the sponge"* through apathy or discouragement?

Do I respond to the restless searching of youth by assuring them of the world's need for persons with their talent and motivation? Or do I muff my chances to communicate with them?

Am I readying myself now for future challenges by prayer and wholesome self-restraint? Or do I settle for an easy-going existence, expecting the Lord to work wonders when emergencies arise?

—The Christophers

FOUR POEMS

William Walter DeBolt

COMPLICATED WORLD

What a complicated world
Tortured with concern—
Once we had to light a fire;
Now too many burn!

DO IT NOW

If you have a task before you,
Do it now.
Never wait until tomorrow
Comes with cups of grief and sorrow—
Do it now.

If some challenge beckons to you,
Do it now.
Indecision, cur of worry,
Bites, unless you learn to hurry—
Do it now.

GOOD WORD OF GOD

Good word of God, light of all years,
Trimmed by these unconforming days,
Give to our one-roomed world of fears
Once more the canticle of praise.

And in our busy marketplace
Give faith—life's shining coin,—and then
Give hope, the holiest priest of grace,
To bless the inner court of men.

Give Christ, the spirit's broken bread,
New, rampant needs to satisfy;
And pledge to restless days ahead
The heavenly loaves shall multiply.

ALPHABETICAL NEBULAE

You workers of the crossword puzzles of
the world—
you who look forward and backward like
Janus
for alphabetical nebulae in captivity,
what is the reason you keep writing your
names
in blank spaces of the years
and juggle the corpus of answers?

MARY...
IN A TWENTIETH CENTURY GARDEN

From the vessel of my being
I poured the spirit of my longing
Into the mold of Life, and you became
Fulfillment of Life's deep desire.
Wind and fire awakened in your soul
Until the whole being of your life knew meaning.
Now I walk the path of loneliness and doubt,
Wondering as to the strength of your frail wings
To rise above the storms of indecision and moral fear,
Seeking your goal upon Life's troubled way.
Will you be free...to see
The outstretched hand, the questioning heart...
The searching soul.
Will your hand hold the cup of understanding
For those who thirst for knowledge?
Who hunger for kindness?
Let your compassion overflow I pray.
As once another prayed for humankind
Not my will Oh Lord, but Thine.

— *Zelma S. Dennis*

MARY

Janet Hackney

Luke 1:19. "But Mary kept all these things, pondering them in her heart."

Lovingly Mary's hand stitched the tiny garments, humming a tantalizingly familiar tune. The dark head was bent, and there was no one to see the glow in the soft brown eyes, nor to see the smile. Her thoughts were of Elizabeth and the three month visit they had together, speaking of the things they had in common . . . dreaming of the sons they were to bear.

Elizabeth had spoken of the angel Gabriel's appearance to Zacharias and their great joy at the good news that at last she was to bear a son named John, who would be the Prophet of the most high, a herald who would go before his Lord to prepare the way for His coming.

Mary had confided she too had had a visit from the angel, Gabriel, and was to be the mother of a son named Jesus.

Mary felt most humble, fully realizing that hers was the glorious dream of all women of her race . . . to give birth to the Holy Messiah.

Was this decree of Caesar Augustus another part of the fulfillment of the prophesy that the Christ would be born in Bethlehem? It *was* the first census undertaken while Cyrenius was governor of Syria; and Joseph, like the rest, would journey to the town of his birth to be registered. And, wasn't it written in the Torah that Emmanuel would be a direct descendant of David?

As Mary sewed the final stitches in the small clothes, and packed them in a cloth bag in preparation for the trip with Joseph, she felt the vigorous stirring of the Babe in her womb and realized she was in the last stages of her pregnancy. It would take a legal decree to motivate Joseph to leave Nazareth with her at such a time .

It was merciful that Mary didn't realize that some thirty years later, her delicately boned hands would weave a seamless shirt in one piece so beautifully and skillfully that hardened soldiers dividing her son's clothes at the foot of a cross would decide, "Don't let us tear it; let's draw lots and see who gets it," and fulfill the scripture which says: "They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots." Ps. 22:18.

It was merciful too that Elizabeth didn't know that her son would die by a sword because of a malicious whim of a wicked woman and Mary's son on a cross between two thieves.

It wasn't until after the crucifixation and resurrection that Mary would wholly understand the part her son had played in the destiny of the world and another decree made it dangerous even to speak of Him, His name or His work.

Was it fear that the complete story would not be told to all the world that loosened her tongue to a sympathetic listener, her personal physician, Luke?

Dear Heavenly Father: Help us to remember that being the mother of the Christ, nor the mother of the prophet John, herald of our Lord Jesus did not mean immunity from suffering. Give us the courage and faith to hold our crosses high in His name. Amen.

DUTIES OF THE THEOSOPHIST

Annie Besant

A Theosophist must be a citizen of the world at the same time that he is a citizen of his own country; he must love all other Nations, he must try to draw them together, he must treat them with respect, he must try to cultivate that feeling of friendship which alone can cover the differences between one race and another; he must be a peacemaker outside his Nation and also within it—within the Nation, drawing the communities together into one, outside the Nation, trying to draw Nations into a Brotherhood, so that there may be no more war, none of the misery through which the world is passing today. Therefore, in your life outside your Nation, do nothing to increase the spirit of hate, even toward those who are enemies in the physical world today; remember that they also are our human brothers, separated now by a gulf of blood and of misery; but love can build bridges across the gulf and look forward to a future where the Nations shall be once more at one.

HIS VERY ALL

Esther Belle Heins

Gay blooms that grace a picket fence,
The laughter of a child—
The mighty mountain, grave, serene;
Soft breezes, fragrant, mild,
Wide canopy of azure sky;
The daisy's friendly nod—
Are all expressions of the love
Bestowed on us by God.

Tall trees that stretch their arms in prayer—
The joy of little streams,
Cool shadows as they playfully
Advance on golden beams—
Are pleasant ways in which God shows
His love is deep and true,
But when He gave His very All—
His great heart brook for you!

BELIEVE

AND YOU WILL RECEIVE

Marius C. Thode

Those who tell us that God is dead cannot prove their claim, nor do they explain what human agency has replaced God. It is difficult to fathom their false theory unless they mean that God as Creator of the world never existed. Since the beginning of time the ancients even in their ignorance vaguely sensed and believed in a "supreme being" who created the world they lived in. Let those who seek to destroy our faith in God demonstrate if they can that God has deserted the world. God never abandons mankind. It is we who become lost when we abandon God.

Our world such as it is still continues, despite all prophets of gloom and doom who appeared throughout the centuries. God is not likely to destroy His own creation. It is the waywardness of man which mars the paradise God originally provided for us. Some do agree that perhaps what man calls religion may slowly be dying, and that a more simple and effective approach to God is needed.

Jesus was not a preacher of theology. He was a teacher who taught that the Spirit of God dwells within each individual, and that the Kingdom of God is here on earth. For the most part He taught in the open fields, and used simple language which the people could understand. The multitudes flocked from near and far to hear Him for He always had an interesting and genuine message for them.

Jesus of Nazareth can easily be accepted as the most important figure ever to appear in the history of mankind. That is true whether we choose to call Him man or God. The life of Jesus and what he taught has had an influence on the course of history beyond that of any other great teacher. When He taught that the Spirit of God dwells within each of us He added: "I can of myself do nothing, the Father within me He doeth the works." He told His disciples: "The things that I do ye can also do." That should convince us that we likewise can draw upon the power and the wisdom of God through the daily practice of prayer. Jesus explained how we are to pray to God. "When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask Him."

This power of prayer is the strongest weapon in the arsenal of man, but few understand and use it. The important factor is to have the faith to believe that our prayer will be granted. If the prayer is sincere and will not harm others, it will be answered. Sometimes God may not grant a prayer promptly until He knows that we are ready to receive what we have asked for. All prayers originate in thought, and God has given us the power not only to convey our prayers to Him, but we can also broadcast thoughts from our minds to the minds of others and influence them in our favor, if our thoughts are wholesome. We are warned never to send out evil thoughts, else we receive evil in return. The immutable law of God is that we shall reap what we sow. That is why foolish men injure only them-

selves when they seek to harm others.

Jesus came from the town of Nazareth in Galilee. The men of Galilee were noted for their turbulence, for they resented not only the edicts of the high priests, but openly rebelled against having to pay taxes to Rome. One of their leaders named Judas (not the disciple) led a band of followers in a rebellion which was sternly put down by the Roman soldiers. Later it was Barrabas who led another revolt, but this also failed and Barrabas was imprisoned. Jesus knew all this and was shrewd enough to know that if He let His followers make Him their King, neither the high priests nor the Romans would countenance it, and violence was sure to result. He was already weaning the populace away by peaceful means, and the high priests feared the weakening of their authority over the people.

They tried to tempt Jesus into getting himself involved with the Roman power, but He was far too wise to play their game for them. They became determined that Jesus had to be eliminated somehow, and they schemed to that end. Actually Pontius Pilate had little respect for the high priests, but used them to preserve quiet among the people. Finally through the foul treachery of the disciple Judas, they arrested Jesus, and He was tried before the Sandherin (the Jewish high court) in a rump trial, the outcome of which was foreordained. Then He had to be brought before Pilate, for the law then forbade the execution of any man without the approval of the Roman governor. Pilate was annoyed to be bothered early in the morning when most of Jerusalem still slept. The high priests planned it that way to avoid any uprising by the followers of Jesus in His defense.

At first the verdict of Pilate was: "I see no wrong in this man." However, as already stated, the high priests and Pilate needed each other in their working arrangement. It was the custom that during the Passover holiday the Roman governor would release to the people whichever

prisoner they might prefer. So they stacked the cards, and the high priests had their cohorts and rabble rousers milling in front of Pilate's palace. They screamed out that they wanted the prisoner Barrabas released to them. As a result of this trickery Jesus was condemned to be crucified, to satisfy the diabolical wishes of the high priests. Years later when Pilate was no longer Governor in Jerusalem and was travelling abroad, he was questioned about this incident. He could not recall it, and did not even remember the name of Jesus. To him it had been just another item in the day's routine.

As Christianity spread to other lands it encountered the same opposition from established authority. In Rome Peter was crucified, and Paul was beheaded, and the early Christians were persecuted. In the days of Nero they were thrown to the wild animals in the arena to provide sport for the Roman populace. Finally in about the fourth century A.D., the Roman Emperor Constantine proclaimed Christianity the official religion of Rome. Christianity is proof that basic truth will never die, regardless of how it is abused, or how much fiction is added to it.

In the spirit of fairness let us touch upon the anti-semitism which cropped up in the early days of Christianity. It was brought about by the false propaganda of those who had their own purpose to serve. The people were told that the Jews were "Christ killers." Obviously they were not reminded that Jesus and His disciples were Jews. In their ignorance they did not understand that the earliest followers of Jesus were the Jewish people.

The term *Christ* is a Greek word meaning saviour or redeemer. *Bible* is also a Greek word meaning book. This book was written by men. It includes much of the wisdom of the ages, though some of it was written to fit the era to which it applied. We should keep in mind that the meaning of some words has changed since the Bible was translated into English. In the

Proverbs of Solomon it is wisely written: "Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom, but with all thy getting get understanding." When we possess both wisdom and understanding we no longer believe everything we read or hear, without first asking ourselves whether we can accept it as truth, or if it may have been planted to serve some ulterior motive.

We are all children of the one God, and it is only His power which can save us from destroying what could be a happy future. Let us join together and earnestly pray for His help and guidance.

RENEWAL

The winter is over and past—forever
For those whose lot with Christ is cast;
These go continually in a spring-like air
With buds of hope and faith on branches bare.

For these the time of singing now has come,
Ignoring freezing rain and threats of snow;
They speak with the voice of promise bold
Of Him who warms with joy the heart once cold.

Rains of gloom and pessimism
Put forth shoots of song and leaf of laughter
Wherever doors are opened wide
And Christ invited to come inside.

These lift their summer hearts to smile
On snowflakes blowing cold before the gale;
These see the sun still bright within the bloom
Who trust the Christ their burdens to assume.

— *Pollyanna Sedziol*

PRAYERS OF TWELVE FAITHS

BUDDHIST: - All praise be to the Lord, the Holy One, Perfect in Wisdom.
I go to The Enlightened One for refuge,
I go to the Law for refuge,
I go to the Brotherhood for refuge.

CONFUCIAN: - Oh, revere! Oh, revere! God is glorious.
Help me to bear this burden on my shoulders,
And show me the glorious virtue and conduct.

HINDU: - Let us meditate upon the adorable light of the Divine Vivifier.
May He direct our minds.

JAIN: - Adoration to the Lord, the Destroyer of foes, the Supreme God, the King of those who have attained Victory.

ZOROASTRIAN: - Blessed was the Thought, and blessed was the Word, and blessed was the Deed of the Holy One.
Purity is the best gift. Happiness is to him who is pure for the sake of purity.

CHRISTIAN: - Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

JEWISH: - Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One. And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy might.

MOSLEM: - There is no Deity but God.
All praise be to God, the Lord of all the worlds,
The merciful, the Compassionate,
The Master of the Day of Judgment.

SHINTO: - All ye men who dwell under heaven!
Regard all beings as your brothers and sisters
You will then enjoy this divine country,
Free from hate and sorrow.

SIKH: - The One Supreme Being, whose name is Eternal Truth;
The Creator, the Spirit, devoid of fear and enmity,
Immortal, Unborn, Self-existent, the Enlightener, the Bestower of Grace, Glory be to Him.

TAO: - To know the Eternal is enlightenment.
The Divine Way is the asylum of all things,
The good man's treasure, the bad man's last resort.

ANCIENT SANSKRIT PRAYER: -

May He who is One without second,
Who is beyond all distinction of color, caste and creed,
Who, knowing all our needs meets them with His manifold powers;
May He who is in the beginning, in the middle, and in the end;
May He unite us in fellowship and understanding.

(Taken from RIG VEDA)

BOOK REVIEW

THE GOLDEN THREAD OF REALITY, by Genevieve Burnell; Foreword by Narcissa G. Chamberlain; Hastings House, Publishers, New York, New York; 179 pp., $4.95.

Peter Funk

We live in strange and wild times. There is unparalleled luxury for some, abysmal poverty for others. We live in an age when materialism, when the desire to have the newest, the shiniest, the most fashionable, is rampant.

What has this to do with *The Golden Thread of Reality* by Genevieve Burnell? Everything, really. What saddens me is that because of our times, few people will, comparatively speaking, take the trouble to read this book. The reason is simple. There are not that many people in our country who are concerned with the reality of the inner life. As a matter of fact, most of us are not even aware that there is an inner life or that we possess a soul. If some people do have such an awareness, they do not bother to take the first step to find out about it.

The Golden Thread of Reality is not a so-called popular book on faith. Nor is it in the genre of a religious classic. It falls into that rather neglected middleground. This book is not always easy reading; yet mild persistence uncovers pertinent truths that can become important corner stones of the various facets of one's faith. It is a calm, joyous book, a book of hope, deeply concerned with the most important topic of our lives—*God!*

The author died in 1961. She had carried on the work of her parents who had lectured extensively in the area of religious-philosophy. Her own good and productive life was a solid witness to the faith she taught.

The book is broadly divided into two portions. Part One discusses the essential unity existing among the major faiths throughout the world.

The author quotes the Russian author Leo Tolstoy as saying, "There may be diversity in religious doctrines, but there is only one Religion." Later she goes on to show that the "differences between men in the world are not so much an inner state as they are the results of some external interference with nature which modifies the fulfillment of man's latent potentialities, mental and physical."

Comparing the likenesses existing between all religions, the author illustrates how the Incarnation, the Passion and the Resurrection had all been adumbrated in various myths and legends around the world. Yet, Christianity stands out as unique in that "the Redeemer came as a man in order to open the way for men to return to God." Secondly she points out that it is Christianity's sense of personal awareness which is the outstanding characteristic of the Incarnation, the birth of Jesus Christ. "Salvation is an individual experience available to each person who attains regeneration. The personal touch is the very essence of Christianity."

Adroitly she takes up the rather difficult question of what is "the self", contrasting the differences and similarities between the Eastern and Western concepts. One finds that whether he is Eastern or Western in outlook, his own perception is bound to be sharper after being exposed to the author's thoughts.

Part Two is the search for truth. In one sense this section is somewhat harder to follow in a few places, since philosophy is involved. Yet, paradoxically, it compensates by being more personal. Of course, the ultimate truth *is* God. But the author suggests that truth is not found by devices and formulas, a stumbling block to most of us. She quotes the old adage that he who cannot see God

everywhere, sees him nowhere.

What so many people miss, even those who are active churchgoers, is that we are living in the Kingdom of Heaven *now*. It is not something that we have to wait to experience when we die, for the fact is that we are living in the Kingdom of Heaven at this moment, as I write these words now, as you read them now. It is only for us to realize and to understand that this is what sages, saints and teachers have been telling us for generations. The late C. S. Lewis, whose books have reached hundreds of thousands of readers, senses that we are living presently in eternity and that those who go on ahead of us are not in the *next* room, so to speak, but are with us in the same room, though existing in another dimension. From the point of view of modern physics, this is entirely feasible.

As she talks about this area, and the miracle that faith and love will perform, I think she catches the ecstatic joy of the moment when one realizes the veracity of this. "Can we accept the truth wholeheartedly? Can we keep our minds from saying, 'It's too good to be true?' This is the Good News that Jesus proclaimed. The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!

"We seem to have deep chasms in our minds—these mysteries that we call life after death—that separate the stages of consciousness . . . Gradually, in meditations and reflections on truth, and in loving the words of truth, this abyss is spanned; and it is found that one does not have to move into another stage of consciousness to be aware of the truth, here and now."

And then too, Genevieve Burnell is sensitive to the longings within—that what we are, all after, is having been converted; that our lives will shine with a strong and vital radiance. We want to overflow with the Holy Spirit and instead of simply living life to realize that we *are* life.

Union with God is possible, and she explains the three basic steps that seekers have always had to take. She equates the *purgative* way with reason, which clears away faulty thinking and prepares us for the *illuminative* stage which she describes as the positive action of faith in our lives. Finally we no longer have to struggle with concepts, but sense the continuous presence of God.

Her explanation of evil is interesting in that she likens it to stages of ignorance. It is the unfulfillment of a logical expectation of good. A rather unusual and creative touch is her use of the incident of Christ withering the fig tree.

The only criticism I have is not concerned with the text, but rather with the title. It is accurate to be sure, for The Golden Thread is the reality of the *God* — experience that people of all faiths and at all times have encountered. But with the plethora of books that compete for space in bookstores, I am sorry that rather than using an abstract word such as *reality* (for this will have various vague meanings for different people) that something more concrete was not used. A title should be like a headline in a newspaper: easy to understand and grasp instantly by everyone.

The best way to use this book is to underline lavishly those passages which have special meaning. Then return to them later and think about them, reading around them so that you get the whole feel of what the author is trying to present.

Narcissa G. Chamberlain, who put this book together from notes and transcripts of speeches of Genevieve Burnell, should be congratulated for having done a skillful piece of work. The book has continuity *and* unity.

I wish the book the success it deserves and hope that it gains a wide readership. It is a star in a mountain of trash.

NOTICES and COMMENTS

FOR OUR LIBRARY. FIP is the grateful recipient of several books. (Incidentally, these books are kept in our library for loan to anyone who cares to borrow them.) J. Sig Paulson sent us two: *Living With Purpose,* A Guide for Embarking on a Dynamic New Way of Life, and *Here's A Thought,* the first published by Doubleday, the other by Unity Books, Lee's Summit, Missouri. Margaret Moore Jacobs sent her autobiographical *A Lifetime of Sundays,* published by Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan. And Francis Merchant sent *Great Images,* published by College Press, Scottsbluff, Nebraska, which is a study of the "great achievers": among them Thomas More, Buddha, Saint Paul, and Pythagoras.

LADY COOTE VISITS FIP. Emilie, Lady Coote, left her home in Shaftesbury, Dorset, England, to visit this country. An advisor to FIP since 1950, she was entertained at a buffet supper in her honor at the home of Miss Kathryn G. Brown, FIP's Executive Secretary. Trustees, advisors, and contributing editors in the New York City area also attended the party. Lady Coote, who charmed everyone, returned to England at the end of March.

TRIBUTE TO A GRAND PERSON. Mr. Harry Halsey Starrett, one of FIP's advisors in the Central Zone, will be honored on April 4 by the Lima, Ohio, Public Library at a ceremony when his bust will be presented to the library. The *Lima Citizen,* referring to Mr. Starrett's services to the library, which he visits daily (at the age of 90-odd), said, "Loyalty and devotion are precious and priceless jewels, which adorn the crown of life of those who have consecrated their lives to serving others. These divine attributes involve sacrifice

and suffering but they have the benediction of Heaven and lead us on to glorious fulfillment."

NEW ADDRESS. Just as FIP was trying to get the last issue on press, it became necessary for us to change our address. Thanks to the efficiency of our Executive Secretary and the enormous help of Member Frank A. Mastropaolo, and Trustees J. E. Thompson and Gordon Belding, new quarters were found and the move made. Please note our new address: Room 1122, 156 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10010. (Telephone: Area Code 212 242-1254).

A NEW FEATURE. FIP's staff is interested in starting a new feature—a page for and by young people. As soon as enough contributions can be gathered, it will appear. You can help by sending in—or by urging your children to send in—work of any appropriate character, poems, stories, articles, even drawings. It is our feeling that our purpose should be as interesting to the young as to those who are not young any longer.

SUBSCRIPTIONS...ADDRESSES? Is your subscription to FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER near expiration? We are confident that if you are a regular reader you will want to continue to receive FIP. Please notify us. Please notify us also if you have changed your address. If this is your first look at our bimonthly, we hope you will subscribe.

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